

Hello and greetings from Legislator Mary Jo Green, Seat 5, Pontotoc District and Committee Chair of the Education Committee! My new committee assignments include Health Care, Legislative, Land Development and the Human Resources Committee. I know that I will enjoy chairing the Education Committee as much as I enjoyed Health Care Committee because education is also very important to me. Joining me on the Education Committee are Beth Alexander, Linda Briggs, Katie Case and Shana Hammond.

The new Committee Chair of Health Care is Connie Barker from Marietta. She and I are joined by Legislators Beth Alexander, Katie Case, Nancy Elliott and Dean McManus. We are all looking forward with great anticipation of many great things to the opening of the new Chickasaw Nation Medical Facility in 2010.

The Education Department under the direction of Administrator Lisa John gives a monthly report to the Education Committee. I will be passing on some of their accomplishments and statistics to you each month through this column. The Nation provides many different programs benefitting so many Chickasaws and other Native Americans seeking education at so many levels.

Several institutions of higher education visited the Nation on a recent Saturday. The event was attended by several Chickasaw students and their families. The presenters such schools as members of the Ivy League Harvard, Yale, Columbia and Brown Universities. The presenters encouraged Chickasaw students to reach for the top through grants and other financing available to Native Americans.

This month Administrator Brown reported that funding is being sought through a grant application to build a safe room at Tishomingo Head Start. The safe room will probably be an above ground room and not a dugout shelter.

Also reported were year-end statistics such as 86 students earned their GED diplomas. Two additional classes were listed to fast track students at Sulphur Head Start. We had 3,190 Chickasaw students with an A/B grade average. The child care assistance program served 319 participants just in the month of August. Of those, 229 children were Chickasaw. Over 215 children are participating in the Chickasaw Nation Reading Program. Fall funding is complete with 2,243 students being funded. The Legislature takes great pride in the number of students attending v-tech schools and colleges.

I hope that you had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends. I also wish everyone a Merry Christmas and may God bless you this coming new year!

I would love to hear from you. Please contact me through my email address [mary.green@chickasaw.net](mailto:mary.green@chickasaw.net) or through the address and telephone number listed elsewhere in this and every issue of the Chickasaw Times and on the Chickasaw Nation web site. My articles are also located on the web site. Until next time, I wish God's blessings on all of our people. Thank you.